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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/776,244	02/02/2001	Andrew Conway	208.1001.02	8154
22883	7590	03/29/2004	EXAMINER	
SWERNOFSKY LAW GROUP PC P.O. BOX 390013 MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94039-0013			BOOKER, KELVIN E	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2121	6

DATE MAILED: 03/29/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/776,244

Applicant(s)

CONWAY ET AL.

Examiner

Kelvin E Booker

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 February 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☒ Other: Detailed Office Action.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. **Claims 1-37** are objected to because the disclosed claims are replete with punctuation and grammatical errors. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. **Claims 1-37** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The terms “relatively unlikely” and “relatively likely” in **claims 1, 14 and 24**; and the term “relatively nonlocal” in **claims 2, 3, 15, 16, 31 and 32** are relative terms which render the claims indefinite. The terms “relatively unlikely”, “relatively likely and “relatively nonlocal” are not defined by the claims, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Further, **claims 1 and 30** provide for the use of *generating a hypothesized relationship about genes*, but, since the claims do not set forth any steps involved in the methods/processes, it is unclear what methods/processes applicant is intending to encompass. A claim is indefinite

where it merely recites a use without any active, positive steps delimiting how this use is actually practiced.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

5. **Claims 1-37** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the invention as disclosed in **claims 1, 14, 24 and 30** are directed to non-statutory subject matter. While the claims are in the technological arts, they are not limited to practical applications in the technological arts.

Specifically, **claims 1 and 30** focus on a series of steps to be performed on a computer, but the ideas are disclosed abstractly from any particular practical application. The claims are directed towards a method for *generating a hypothesized relationship about genes*, but fail to provide the steps necessary to enable the claimed process.

Further, **claims 14 and 24**, focus on *an apparatus* and *memory*, respectively, wherein the elements are recited in means plus function format, however the claims fail to define a statutory specific machine. A machine or manufacture or system claim may be one of two types: (1) a claim that encompasses any and every machine for performing the underlying process or any and every manufacture that can cause a computer to perform the underlying process, or (2) a claim that defines a specific machine or manufacture. When a claim is of the first type, Office personnel are to evaluate the underlying process the computer will perform in order to determine the patentability of the product.

The mere fact that a hardware element is recited in the claim does not necessarily limit the claim to a specific machine or manufacture. If a product claim encompasses any and every computer implementation of a process, when read in light of the specification, it should be examined on the basis of the underlying process. Such a claim can be recognized, as it will define the physical characteristics of a computer or computer component exclusively as functions or steps to be performed on or by a computer, and encompass any and every product in the stated class, configured in any manner to perform the process.

Claims that define a computer related invention as a specific machine or specific article of manufacture must define the physical structure of the machine or manufacture in terms of its hardware or hardware and "specific software." The applicant may define the physical structure of a programmed computer or its hardware or software components in any manner that can be clearly understood by a person skilled in the relevant art. Generally a claim drawn to a particular programmed computer should identify the elements of the computer and indicate how those elements are configured in either hardware or a combination of hardware and specific software.

To constitutionally interpret the word "process", the Supreme Court has held that: "****A process is a mode of treatment of certain materials to produce a given result. It is an act, or a series of acts, performed upon the subject matter to be transformed and reduced to a different state or thing. ***The Process requires that certain things should be done with certain substances, and in a certain order; but the tools to be used in doing this may be a secondary consequence."(emphasis added) *Diamond, Commission of Patents and Trademarks v. Diehr and Lutton*, 209 USPQ 1, 6 (1981) quoting *Cochrane v. Deener*, 94 U.S. 780, 787-788 (1876).

This Constitutional interpretation of the word “process” is a long-standing one that the Supreme Court requires to be applied in interpreting 35 USC 101. *Diamond v. Diehr* at 6. Consequently, the use of that interpretation is Constitutionally required when we interpret the Federal Circuit’s standard that a “new and useful process” is one that produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result”. Cf. *State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group, Inc.*, 47 USPQ2d 1596, 1600-1601 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

Applicant discloses no “certain substances” that have been “transformed or reduced” in that applicant’s claims disclose no specific computer-readable medium, no manipulation of specific data representing physical objects or activities (pre-computer activity), nor do they disclose any specific independent physical acts being performed by the invention (post-computer activity).

Conclusion

6. The following prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

A. Balaban et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,687,692;

B. Balaban et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,185,561;

C. Guyon et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0172043;

D. Craford et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0097222;

E. Kim et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0087275; and

F. Scherf et al., “A Gene Expression Database For The Molecular Pharmacology of Cancer”.

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7. An inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kelvin Booker whose telephone number is (703) 308-4088. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM-5:30 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anil Khatri, can be reached on (703) 305-0282. The fax number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

An inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

K.E.B.

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March 16, 2004



Wilbert L. Starks, Jr.
Primary Examiner
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